



Farm Center Available as Prep for Spring Planting

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MADISON – The snow will melt and spring planting will begin before we know it. The Wisconsin Farm Center at Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is available to answer questions for farmers as the busy season begins.

“Good planning by farmers before they enter the fields can be the difference in a profitable growing season,” said Kathy Schmitt, Director of DATCP’s Farm Center. “The Farm Center is here to assist Wisconsin’s farmers when making financial decisions, mediating challenging situations or making business plans.”

Before the season begins, the Farm Center reminds farmers to communicate with their lender. The lender should have current balance sheets, tax return information and worksheets for the upcoming year. With good information, the lender can make informed decisions.

If renting land to grow your crops in 2013, have the lease agreement set in a written contract with the landlord. The rate and terms of the contract should be set before planting begins. If conflicts arise during these negotiations, the Farm Center’s mediators can step in to help resolve issues and disputes.

The Farm Center recommends farmers minimize risk as much as possible to protect themselves from the uncontrollable situations such as adverse weather. Understand the crop insurance plan that should already be in place. Evaluate markets to decide the best time to lock in your crop prices.

The Farm Center is available to assist beginning farmers form their business plans or identify their options. Experienced farmers looking to transition to the next generation can contact the Farm Center to find viable strategies and offer support.

With the high costs of inputs, every dollar counts. The Farm Center encourages farmers to have funds available or set-up a financial plan now to make regular payments. Be in communication with the local supplier to secure now the seed, fertilizer, fuel and other inputs needed to be ready at the busiest time.

The Farm Center can provide financial guidance during the planning process. Staff can assist with determining cash flow projects, feasibility analysis and debt restructuring.

Taking steps like making sure the planter is in working condition or that your conservation plan is in order can make a difference in the success of 2013. Weather patterns leave a short window for getting the job done, and by planning now, farmers can improve the bottom line.

Wisconsin Farm Center staff is available weekdays from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Contact DATCP’s Farm Center toll-free at 1-800-942-2474 or farmcenter@wisconsin.gov.

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